

Bellissimo business bites



Porto Bello, in the recently opened Grand Millennium Al Wahda Hotel, is the latest addition to Abu Dhabi's rapidly expanding selection of Italian restaurants. Located right in the centre of town, it's ideally situated for local businessmen and women to grab a spot of lunch and, seeing as Abu Dhabi Week's offices are just down the road, we decided that was all the excuse we needed to jump in the car and check out what it has to offer.

The interior of the restaurant is refreshingly simple with high ceilings, plenty of light and smooth sleek lines. Marco, the charmingly enthusiastic restaurant manager, leads us to our seats and talks us through the menu as he takes our order.

As we're waiting for our starters to arrive, we nibble on a selection of bready treats, which are so fresh they're still deliciously warm. There's barely time for more than a couple of bites before our first course is brought out – lovely steaming bowls of classic minestrone soup; a thick tasty

tomato broth swimming with chunky vegetables and pasta.

On Marco's recommendation, we've decided to try the Scaloppine di Vitello for our main and when it's placed in front of us, we're glad we did. Beautifully presented, the pan-seared escalope of veal almost melts in the mouth and is accompanied by sautéed asparagus, pretty little pumpkin pearls and a salty caper sauce.

Although the portions are generous, we aren't left feeling overly stuffed.

By this point we should really be thinking about heading back to the office, our meal so far has taken just under 45 minutes – perfect for a business lunch – but we've been sidetracked by dessert. Marco has persuaded us to try the tiramisu, which we have to admit is glorious – just the right consistency, not too runny and packed full of flavour. We finish our lunch off with what might be the best cappuccino we've tasted since we've been in Abu Dhabi, perfectly complemented by a lovely little plate of pepper chocolates.

As long as you show a little self-control, Porto Bello is an ideal location for a business lunch – although the food is so good, we can't wait to try it in the evening too. The restaurant has only just opened so it's still relatively quiet. We recommend you get down there soon though; it won't be like that for long.

Jon Muller

What? Porto Bello

Where? Grand Millennium Al Wahda Hotel

Cost: AED 150-200 for three courses

Why? Tasty and authentic Italian fare – perfect for impressing those important clients

Why not? If you only have an hour for lunch, you'll have to try really hard not to be seduced by the delicious desserts and creamy cappuccinos

We say: We came, we ate, we left

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